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Remarks

The Examiner has objected to claims 5 through 8 and 10 for lack of clarity. In addressing these rejections, claims 5 through 8 and 10 have been amended to specify increased structural limitations. Claims 6 and 7 have been further amended to be dependent upon claim 2, thereby specifying that the surface refinement procedure involves a corona treatment device. Review and acceptance is requested.

Claims 11 and 12 are also objected to, since the recitation of "electrodes" lack antecedent basis. In responding thereto, claims 11 and 12 have been amended to be dependent upon claim 2, and the electrodes specified as belonging to the corona treatment device.

Claims 1 through 8, 11 and 16 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Drapatsky '733 in view of Applicants admitted prior art. Claims 9 and 10 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over '733 in view of admitted prior art and in further view of Dinter et. al. '724. Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over '733 in view of admitted prior art and in further view of Wadlinger '974. Claims 17 and 18 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over '733 in view of admitted prior art and in further view of JP '460. Claim 19 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over '733 in view of admitted prior art and in further view of Bayer '641. Claim 20 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over '733 and admitted prior art in further view of Kamoda '616.

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In responding to these rejections, the Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to further recite a feed system having means for aligning the sheet during a momentary sheet stop and to also include means for commonly adjusting a height of the feed system together with the surface refinement station in dependence on a sheet thickness. The Applicant submits the amended claim 1 is distinguished from the prior art of record for the following reasons.

The '733 patent discloses a feeding station having an alignment system utilizing continuous movement of the paper sheet without stopping and starting. The feed system contains vacuum belts only and therefore is limited to treatment of light weight paper only. As pointed out by the Examiner, no surface treatment or corona treatment is mentioned by '733. In contrast thereto, the present invention as amended is directed towards a machine for sheet fed rotary printing having a surface refining station with an alignment system utilizing a momentary sheet stop to align the sheet within the feed system. Moreover, inclusion of the limitation of means for commonly adjusting the height of feed system together with the surface refinement station in dependence on the sheet thickness, make the sheet fed rotary printing machine as claimed particularly suitable for high speed processing of extremely thick substrates (up to 4 mm see specification, page 7 line 4). Since '733 is directed towards low sheet weights and continuous sheet feeding, the '733 disclosure teaches away from the invention as claimed.

The invention as now claimed recites elements not disclosed by the prior art having associated advantages which are similarly not suggested by the relevant prior art of record. The invention is therefore sufficiently distinguished from that prior art to satisfy the conditions for patenting in

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the United States. The dependent claims of record inherit the limitations of the base claims and are therefore similarly distinguished from the prior art of record for the reasons given. Review and acceptance as well as passage to issuance is therefore requested.

No new matter has been added in this amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

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